

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Office of Accountability

Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT

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| <b>DBN:</b>                           | 24Q530  |
| <b>District Name:</b>                 | District 24   |
| <b>School Name:</b>                   | International High School at LaGuardia  |
| <b>School Address:</b>                | 31-10 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101  |
| <b>Principal:</b>                     | John Starkey  |
| <b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b> | Improvement (year-1) - Comprehensive  |
| <b>Areas of Identification:</b>       | English Language Arts - All Students; English Language Learners;<br>and Economically Disadvantaged Students<br>Graduation Rate – All Students |
| <b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>       | February 7- 8, 2012   |

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“The mission of the International High School at LaGuardia Community College is to enable each of our students to develop the linguistic, cognitive, and cultural skills necessary for success in high school, college, and beyond. We are committed to the following educational principles:

Educational Philosophy-

1. Limited English proficient students require the ability to understand, speak, read, and write English with near-native fluency to realize their full potential within English – speaking society.
2. In an increasingly interdependent world, fluency in a language other than English must be viewed as a resource for the student, the school, and the society.
3. Language skills are most effectively learned in context and emerge most naturally in purposeful, language-rich, interdisciplinary study.
4. The most successful educational programs are those that emphasize high expectations coupled with effective support systems, as mirrored in our portfolio presentation requirement for graduation.
5. Individuals learn best from each other in heterogeneous, collaborative groupings.
6. Career-oriented internships facilitate language acquisition as well as contribute a significant service to the community.

7. The most effective instruction takes place when teachers actively participate in the school decision making process, including instructional program design, curriculum development and material selection.”

## **PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- The school environment is warm, collegial and nurturing for students and staff.
- Teachers are empowered and the school leader encourages feedback and provides support to teachers and students.
- A strong collaboration exists between the International High School at LaGuardia and the LaGuardia Community College via access to the library, gymnasium, science laboratories, and opportunities to receive college credit.

## **PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Data are collected and analyzed from multiple sources including the English Language Arts (ELA) Regents examinations and New York State English as Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). There was limited evidence that the results of the item analysis are used to develop specific instructional strategies for specific students, including the identified subgroups.
- There is limited evidence that formative data are used to plan for and monitor student outcomes or to improve academic programs, track student progress, and support improved student learning.
- There is limited evidence that the analysis of assessment data to monitor student progress is used to make changes and improvements in the instructional program, including changes in the curriculum to address the individualized needs of at-risk students.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school should request support from the Network or outside partners in developing teacher skills needed to implement a more rigorous and systematic analysis of data to identify the aspects of ELA that are causing greatest concern. Plans should then be put in place to ensure that these areas are a focus for teaching and learning. The school leadership should monitor classroom practice and hold staff accountable to ensure that improvements are made.
- School leaders should develop a system for the use of formative data in order to improve academic programs and support improved student learning. School leaders should investigate and identify resources on how to effectively use information provided by assessments to inform teachers on how to tailor their teaching to meet the specific needs of a single student or whole class. Professional development (PD)

should be provided schoolwide to help teachers implement this practice in their effort to improve students' performance.

- School leaders should set clear expectations for teachers regarding collecting, recording and analyzing data from student work. There should be a range of the types of formative assessment data that are collected, such as conference notes, running records, and notebook assessments. The ongoing assessments and record keeping should be appropriately documented and should include plans for modifying instruction and next steps for developing more rigorous curriculum that meets the needs of students. School leaders should review the data work regularly during walkthroughs, informal observations, etc. School leaders should meet with teachers quarterly to review students' performance and set goals for student progress toward meeting shared learning goals. Informal and formal observations should include feedback for teachers on the effectiveness of their use of data to inform instruction.

## **II. TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **FINDINGS:**

- There is no evidence of a consistent, schoolwide standards-based curriculum across grades or departments. Teacher created syllabi includes topics; however, teaching points and strategies are not included.
- The instructional program for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) is not aligned to the New York State Learning Standards nor with the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) which will be implemented beginning in the 2012-13 school year.
- In most classes observed, lessons were not rigorous and did not include higher order thinking skills, nor were they developmentally appropriate. Lessons did not provide access to challenging learning opportunities for all students including the identified subgroups. Many of the students that were interviewed stated that their curriculum was not challenging.
- Although students were arranged in groups, there was very limited evidence of purposeful grouping for small group differentiated instruction in the classes observed.
- In the lessons observed, there was limited evidence of the implementation of an effective instructional plan that consists of strategies aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and the new CCLS. Teachers do not use data to inform their instructional planning or to modify instruction.
- Although the Language Allocation Policy (LAP) indicates that English language learners (ELLs) should be programmed for no more than the mandated English as a Second Language (ESL)/ELA instructional units, this was not reflected in reviewed students' schedules and programs.
- There was a limited use of textbooks and an over reliance on worksheets requiring low level comprehension skills in classes observed. Students and parents interviewed stated that there is limited use of textbooks in the classrooms.
- Vocabulary and language concepts were primarily taught in isolation. In some classes observed, students were required to copy definitions of words out of context.

- There was no schoolwide uniform grading policy observed. However, interviews revealed that each team has their own grading policy that assesses the same criteria but weighted differently.
- In visited classes, exemplary English language immersion strategies such as interactive conversation, modeling, scaffolding, and demonstration and read aloud were used minimally.
- In most visited classes, comprehension and recall type questions were mainly evident. Limited evidence was observed of the use of questioning strategies that assess students' understanding, engage students in higher level critical thinking that leads to mastery of lesson objectives and the development of problem solving skills.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The Network should work with the school on the development of curriculum in all core areas and ensure that it is aligned with the current New York State Learning Standards and the new P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in English language arts and literacy to prepare for implementation in school year 2012-13. All curricula should be developed by knowledgeable and trained individuals (national, State or local) who understand the key elements of curriculum development.

All teachers and administrators should participate in professional development (PD) on how to plan and implement a curriculum with rigor, as well as on delivery methods that are student-centered. The curriculum should be relied upon as the basis for assessing individual student mastery and progress. Walkthroughs and formal evaluations should include how well the teacher knows and implements the curriculum for the subjects being taught.

- School leaders should ensure that the curriculum is differentiated to address the needs of all students, including SIFE. They should also ensure that lessons for the SIFE instructional program are age and grade appropriate.
- The school leader should ensure that PD opportunities are provided to teachers to ensure that all student work is appropriately challenging and demanding. Teachers should collaborate to create lessons that incorporate standards-based skills and higher order thinking skills, such as synthesis, evaluation, and application, through the use of differentiated instruction. The school leadership team should conduct regular observations of lessons to monitor the consistency of these practices.
- The school should provide PD that can assist teachers to use data analysis to formulate groups that are differentiated to meet individual student needs. All students should be provided with tasks and activities that address their specific learning needs in all lessons. School leaders should monitor teacher planning and instruction to ensure that the use of data to group students becomes common practice in all classrooms. Ongoing PD should be provided on the implementation of flexible grouping based on formative and summative data for teachers that continue to struggle with this strategy.
- School leaders should encourage teachers to plan daily and include in their lesson plans key components of explicit teaching points, "turn and talk" strategies, independent work, and "think, pair share". Teachers should use students' independent and instructional reading level to plan effectively to meet the needs of their students including the identified groups.

- School leaders should ensure that schedules are provided to students and the schedules reflect the planned ESL/ELA instructional time that is mandated for their English language proficiency as determined by the NYSELAT score.
- The school should monitor the use of appropriate resources in classes in each academic discipline and provide opportunities for students to use such resources at home through appropriate assignments. The school leader should ensure that enough texts and reading books are available for students' use and to support the school's instructional plan.
- The school should enlist the support of the Network to investigate strategies that involve the direct and indirect methods of vocabulary instruction. School leaders should ensure that teachers receive appropriate training in the use of these methodologies and as a component of the overall ELA instruction. School leaders should monitor teachers' use of and the implementation of these strategies.
- The school should develop a uniform grading policy across all grades/content areas that is reflective of uniform expectations for student academic performance.
- School leaders should ensure through classroom observations and lesson planning that ESL methodologies, including native language support strategies, are incorporated appropriately in the lessons. School leaders should ensure that all teachers are provided with the appropriate training in English language immersion strategies and monitor its effective use in the classroom.
- School leaders should support teachers in developing a variety of questioning techniques aimed at critical thinking and using problem solving skills appropriate to student development. Teachers should encourage students to use skills, such as synthesis, analysis, evaluation or application of learning. Teachers should ensure that strategies developed during training are implemented in their daily instruction. School leaders should make questioning techniques a focus for observation.

### **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- As a new Principal, the school leader's targeted PD is focused on administrative and process matters. The Principal identified the need for further training in the areas of item skills analysis and instructional strategies to address the needs of SIFE.
- The school leader practices distributive leadership. However, there is little evidence that the school leader facilitates intercommunication between teams in order to focus on schoolwide goals that address the specific identified areas in need of improvement.
- The school leader has received some formal training on how to evaluate staff using the new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) model for teacher effectiveness. However, the other members of the school leadership team have not received any training.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school should enlist the support of the Network to seek additional PD on curriculum and instructional strategies that are aligned to the New York State Learning Standards and the CCLS in ELA, ESL and address SIFE issues; and the use of data for instructional planning and continuous monitoring of progress of all students and subgroups.
- School leaders should ensure that each team, as a subsystem, is functioning to complement each other in the achievement of the school improvement goals and establish a plan-assess-adjust cycle to ensure their effectiveness.
- The school leader should continue to seek opportunities to be trained and become certified on how to evaluate staff using the APPR mode for teacher effectiveness. The Principal, with the support of the Network should ensure that all school leaders also become trained.

## **IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

### **FINDINGS:**

- In the classes observed during the academic intervention periods, there was no evidence of a structure in place to support achievement in the areas of ELA and graduation rates for the identified subgroups. There is no indication that parents have received the required notices for Academic Intervention Services (AIS).
- Meetings of all teams occur at the same time and instruction does not take place during those periods. Class periods are one-hour and ten minutes.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school should develop an AIS plan to meet the needs of eligible students, including the selection of content and instructional strategies. Within the plan, a process for students to demonstrate proficiency in a subject and criteria for exiting the AIS program should be incorporated. School leaders should monitor AIS implementation through observations and walkthroughs. Parents should be notified when their child is scheduled for AIS including the reason for AIS, the type of service(s) provided, and the beginning and ending of services.
- The school should revise the schedule to enable more productive meetings for teachers across grade levels and content areas. School leaders should re-examine the length of the class periods to determine its effectiveness.

## **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **FINDINGS:**

- Documentation indicated that there is a year long PD plan; however, there is limited evidence that it serves to bring about changes for improvement in the identified areas and subgroups.

- Based on classroom observations, available documentation and student and parent interviews, there is a need for PD for the instructional staff to ensure that lessons are rigorous and closely aligned to New York State Learning Standards and the CCLS.
- There is limited evidence that staff is receiving the necessary training and support to analyze and interpret data for all subgroups to plan interventions that address students' academic needs and to differentiate instruction.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leader should develop and implement a PD plan designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to ensure that teachers participate in substantial PD in order to remain current with their profession and meet the learning needs of their students. The PD plan should be aligned with the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) goals and should take into account the individual needs of staff and students.
- The school should seek the assistance of the Network to provide PD on lesson planning that incorporates rigorous tasks that are aligned with New York State Learning Standards and the CCLS for ELA and literacy, with particular attention to the identified subgroups.
- The school with guidance from the Network and other entities should seek PD opportunities for both the school leadership and instructional staff to participate in hands-on data analysis activities to inform instruction and to ensure student improvement.

**VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

**FINDINGS:**

- Adequate laboratory facilities and materials are available to meet the needs of the students. Science classes are held in the LaGuardia Community College laboratories. However, the facilities are not being used for hands-on inquiry based lessons.
- In observed classrooms, there was limited use of technology to meet the needs of students, in particular for students in the identified sub-groups.
- There was limited display of students' work with rubrics and teacher comments in classrooms and throughout the building.
- Many classrooms observed were over-crowded. However, it was indicated that the school will be occupying new facilities at the beginning of the new school year.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school leader should encourage teachers to make greater use of the available laboratory facilities for hands-on, inquiry based laboratory activities.

- The school, with assistance from the Network, should investigate the use of appropriate technology that can be integrated into the curriculum and develop a comprehensive technology plan for implementation. The school leader should, with the support of the Network, provide teachers with on-going PD for incorporating technology currently available into their lesson plans to support interactive and hands-on learning. School leaders should monitor technology usage through observations and walkthroughs.
- School leaders should encourage teachers to showcase exemplars of students' work in classrooms and on bulletin boards in hallways. Rubrics should be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards and the new CCLS and used as an integral tool in planning and assessing assignments. Teachers should participate in PD activities that model the use of rubrics to provide teacher feedback that helps students improve and move to the next level.
- The school, Network and the District should ensure that the physical environment is not overcrowded and is conducive to support teaching and learning.

#### **PART 4: CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

As the school leadership implements the school's restructuring plan to move to their new location in the 2012-13 school year, the current structure and organization should be evaluated to determine its effectiveness to support the changes needed to move the school forward. The school leadership should also take the opportunity to develop a curriculum that is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and the CCLS that will inform their instruction, PD, and technology use. Another critical area for school improvement is the use of data to support the instructional plan and monitor students' progress.

The findings and recommendations noted in the report are intended to guide the school's inquiry, planning, and the development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) for school year 2012-13. The school should also continue its efforts in the implementation of the following Regents Reform Agenda initiatives: P-12 Common Core Learning Standards, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.